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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/032,701	12/28/2001	Sandra A. Richlen	659-920	5371

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EXAMINER

REICHLE, KARIN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3761

DATE MAILED: 03/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/032,701

Applicant(s)

RICHLEN ET AL. *ON*

Examiner

Karin M. Reichle

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 1-9-04.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-5, 7-26, 28 and 30-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-5, 7-26, 28 and 30-44 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Election/Restrictions*

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

I. Claims 1, 3-5(Note discussion of claim 3 infra), 7-10, 22-26, 28, 30, 41 and 43, drawn to an absorbent garment, classified in class 604, subclass 385.11.

II. Claims 11-20, 31-40, 42 and 44, drawn to an absorbent garment, classified in class 604, subclass 385.11.

III. Claim 21, drawn to an absorbent article, classified in class 604, subclass 385.11.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions III and (I and III) are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the combination claim 21 does not require the specifics of perforations, or fasteners or front and rear body panels with a crotch edge and an absorbent composite as set forth in the Group I and II subcombination claims which serve as evidence claims. The subcombination has separate utility such as a front ear panel having a primary fastening constituted by the perforation with a tensile strength thereacross required to be less than 6.62 lbf but any tear strength in combination with a secondary fastener or a front fly structure having a primary fastening constituted by a thinning of material or a strip of a different kind of material

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having a tear strength less than 5 lbf but a tensile strength greater than 14 lbf in combination with a secondary fastener.

Inventions II and I are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the combination as claimed in the Group II claims does not require the combination of perforations, tensile strength and tear strength as claimed in the Group I claims which claims serve as evidence claims. The subcombination has separate utility such as perforated body panel such as an openable fly or cuff or collar or bib or gown or apron having a required tensile strength of less than 5 lbf and any tear strength.

3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the search required for Group III or II is not required for Group I and II or Group I, respectively, due to diverging subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

4. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the

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application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

5. It is noted that claim 3 as now amended depends from cancelled claim 2. It was presumed for the purposes of this restriction that it was also not cancelled and depended from one of the claims in the Group I claims. Cancellation or amendment to resolve the dependency of claim 3 is thus also requested. It is also noted that the Request for amendment to the Drawings did not include an explanation of all the changes presented, see 37 CFR 1.121 effective 7-30-03 and, e.g., the change of numeral 142 to 42 in Figure 1, the dashed lines rather than solid lines from 167 in Figure 2.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (703) 308-2617. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Calvert can be reached on (703) 308-1025. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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*K. M. Reichle*  
Karin M. Reichle  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3761

KMR  
March 9, 2004

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